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ABSTRACT

For most of its history, the science of anthropology has focused upon the influence of the city, state, and/or western civilization on tribal and peasant communities. Within the past decade a number of theories have arisen which suggest that tribal and peasant communities have had a profound influence on cities and the modern world. Through the use of archaeological and ethnographic data, this paper illustrates the application of the notion of world paradigm, the rural revolution, and modernization with particular attention paid to the world's political, economic, and communication arenas. A 9-item list of references and a list of classroom discussion topics are included. (Author/DB)

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THE INTERPENTRATION OF THE TRIBAL AND MODERN WORLD
AN EXAMPLE OF A WORLD PARADIGM

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Abstract

For most of its history the science of anthropology has focused upon the influence of the city, state and/or western civilization on tribal and peasant communities. Within the past decade a number of theories have arisen which suggest that tribal and peasant communities have had a profound influence on cities and the modern world. Through the use of archaeological and ethnographic data this paper will illustrate the application of the notion of world paradigm, the rural revolution, and modernization with particular attention paid to the world's politcal, economic, and communication arenas.

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INTRODUCTION

Much attention has been paid to the term "global" these past few years. Recently there was EARTH DAY which focused on ecological problems. News items include descriptions of international trade problems and the realignment of political divisions between nations. History is being rewritten through the publication of such works as Crosby's ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM:The Biological Expansion of Europe 900-1900. World Geography texts now substitute the term "Global" for "World." In essence Kuhn's notion of a major paradigmatic shift may be appropriately applied to the manner in which an individual looks at himself/herself in relation to the external world. Such a shift in individual and group perception requires a new explanatory model.

During its early history anthropology focused on prehistoric groups and isolated tribal societies primarly because the evidence of their existence was was being lost due to destruction or contact with the "outside" world. Today, although the older perspective persists, archaeologists are digging into landfills and cultural anthropologists are describing the accommodation of tribal people to city life. The focus for both archaeology and cultural anthropology has moved from a syncronic orientation to a diachronic explanation, from micro to macro environments in order not only to understand the present, but the past as well.

THE WORLD PARADIGM

Western or Neo-European (Crosby:148) mentality dominated by the scientific method as a research procedure is reductionist in its approach to reality. That is to say it seeks to reduce phenomena into bits and pieces ignoring their inter-connectiveness. In social science such concepts as "nation," "society," "culture," threaten to convert these concepts into specific objects. Only by understanding these concepts as configurations of relationships, and by placing them into the realm from which they were extracted can one increase understanding. (Wolf:3)

The "one world" concept is increasingly becoming an accepted fact. The demograhic connections of the world indicate large scale migrations; East Indians to Fiji, Jamaicans to London, Dominicans to New York. The ecological connections document the movement of diseases around the world; Hong Kong Flu in the United States, syphilis from the New World to the Old; the movement of fauna: pigs, cattle, horses and flora: dandelions and nettles, which accompanied the settlers into the New World (Crosby:156,174), and the economics of trans-Atlantic trade: slaves, cotton, and textiles which affected people in Africa who

had never seen a European trader, a fact rarely mentioned in history books. Instant translation and the increase of bilingual authors is now creating a "world" literature. Nor should one overlook the creation of a major political institution created to cope with world problems, the United Nations.

If all these conceptions exist, why is it that we persist in converting dynamic, inter-connected phenomena into static, disconnected entities? It is due perhaps to the way which we were taught history inside the classroom and without. Among historians and other social scientists, there exists a notion of "Western Civilzation" apart from and in opposition to other societies and civilizations. This notion also has a genealogy, according to which ancient Greece begat Rome, Rome begat Christian Europe, Christian Europe begat the Renaissance, the Renaissance the Englightenment, and the Enlightenment political democracy, and the industrial revolution. (Wolf:5) The inter-connectiveness of "western" though the arts and life style to "eastern" peoples only recently has been treated in college textbooks.

Such a developmental scheme is misleading as it ignores the contributions of the Chinese and Arabs to the west. It turns Orientals and Muslims into "foreigners" who are "invading" the United States. It ignores the class conflicts which nearly destroyed Greece, and in so doing permits us to ignore the class conflicts within both the United States and the Third World. It does not explain why more Greeks were fighting in the ranks of the Persian army than in the ranks of the Hellenic Alliance against the Persians. It does not explain why more Greeks were living in Magna Gracia (southern Italy and Sicily) than in Greece proper. (Wolf:5) The scheme just does not invite us to ask such questions.

United States history is also prone to such myth-making. Schoolbook versions do not describe antagonistic forces such as the creation of two federated countries: North and South, each with its own cultural core, economic base, and zone of expansion. The occupation of Florida closed off the main escape route from southern slavery; the war with Mexico made the Southwest safe for slavery and cotton. The North and the South, one country importing its work force from Europe, the other from Africa, fought one of the bloodiest wars in history, which the McGuffy Readers refer to as the war between the Boys in Blue and Boys in the Grey. Following the war the South became a colony of the North until their alignment was changed following World War II with the rise of the Sunbelt.

United States history could have been different. There could have been a Floridian Republic, a Francophile Mississippian America, a Hispanic New Biscay, a Republic of Great Lakes, and a Columbia comprisng the present Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. United States history cannot be explained in terms of the "Manifest Destiny" of a single unit, but rather of a temporally and spatially changing set of relationships, or relationships among sets of relationships. (Wolf:6) Terms such as East and West, or First, Second, Third Worlds inhibit the

understanding of what has occured and is occuring in the world today.

In the social sciences terms such as social order-social disorder, Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft, folk-urban, sacred-secular, modern-primitive, have encouraged the maintenance of a paradigm which treats units of social order as discrete entities. Anthropology in its evolutionist and diffusionist phases began as a world anthropology. As interests shifted under the influence of the Boasian historical school to studying living cultures and their folkways in specific habitats, anthropologists used models such as functionalism and social integration which focused on a social group as a hypothetical isolate, whose features contributed to the maintenance of the group and group survival.

While some anthropologists focused on an intensive study of a single case, others turned to statistical cross-cultural comparisons of single features drawn from large samples of ethnographically known cases, i.e., the relationship bewtween child-rearing practices and economic modes of production. A major problem was the isolation of discrete cases for comparison. Are the hundreds of local Eskimo groups local cases, or are they larger clusters such as Copper, Netsilik, and Iglulik? Or do they constitute a single Eskimo group? All of these answers assumes the autonomy and boundedness of the cases which are selected for comparison.

Wolf (17) suggests that we take cognizance of the processes which transcend separate cases, moving through asnd beyond them and transforming them as they proceed. He suggests that one need not quarrel with the term society to designate an empircally verifiable cluster of interconnections among people as long as there are no prejudgements about its state of internal cohesion or boundedness in relation to the external world. Thus one must think of human societies not in terms of prehistoric, primitive, or modern or closed systems, but as open systems with connections far and near.

If one pursues this notion further, one will recognize that there can be no "Black History" apart from "White History." Ethnohistorians were soon to recognize that "their" and "our" history emerged as the same history. This does not deny that cultural forms or designs for living do exist and that they determine behavior, form of objects, and ideas, but that we need to understand how cultural forms manage to mediate social relationships among specific populations. (Wolf:19)

Karl Marx, Andre Gunder Frank, and Immanuel Wallerstein using a wider universal paradigm focused on the origin and development of capitalism with the exploitation of a class, a satellite of a metropolitan center, or individuals within a global market. What they did not consider were the processes at work on the periphery to draw these individuals or groups into the larger system. How are tribes and peasant communities incorporated into a world paradigm?

To accomplish this task one would have to write a book as Wolf did. What I will attempt to accomplish now is to provide

some examples of how such a world paradigm might be operationalized by examining three interrelated arenas of human activity: political, economic, and communication.

The term TRIBE has no commonly accepted definition. The Romans indentified tribes as social units. Today tribes are characteristically small scale groupings that display some form of cultural unity; whose members explicity recognize some cultural unity. (Hunter:393) Such a definition may also apply to such human groupings as a neighborhood, street gang, a religious organization, or any ethnic group. Thus the term TRIBALISM sometimes is attributed to behavior characteristics of small groups within a modern city.

For the purpose of this analysis, however, the term will be used to indicate a kinship-based social unit whose cultural forms coincide with a specific territory and whose members distinguish themselves as spatially distinct from other social groups surrounding them. Ofentimes, these are referred to as primitive or traditional societies. Some tribes with a foraging economy are dispersed over a large area, some nomadic tribes with a transhumance economy may follow their herds over a specified area, still other tribes with a horticultal economy may reside year around in a village, and some tribes may engage in a mixture of these economies and residential units.

THE RURAL REVOLUTION

Halpern has suggested that a rural revolution is taking place which may be as dramatic as was the domestication of animals or the invention of the steam engine. This revolution is a broad, long term, progressive elimination of the characteristics that make rural and urban modes of life culturally, socially, and geographically separabele. (1-2) It includes the mass exodus from rural areas and the intrusion of technology into the countryside. It involves the creation of new kinds of units i.e., the man-land relationship within a village is no longer of primary importance. New world-wide living and working arrangements are being created. World organizations and nations are incorporating former discrete isolated units into their political, economic, and ideological systems. This change is distinct from previous changes in that the solution sought is of this world and not in any future social systems or comfort in life after death. (Halpern:124)

Dogmatic philosophies can only provide temporary solutions. One must look beyond these to the long history of human cultural evolution as indicators of how humans have discovered and continue to discover solutions which contribute to their survival. The perspective must not only include a longer temporal period, but and increase in spatial perspective as well. Thus the

decline of the Maya civilzation cannot be explained in terms of internal political disorganization, the decline in the fertility of the soil, or the refusal of peripheral populations to provide obsidium for the state religion, but the perseverance of the people over time from the first evidence of Maya culture until the current situation among the Maya people in the Yucatan.

POLITICS AND TRIBAL PEOPLE

An agrarian elite has been replaced with captains of industry and finance, the military, and high ranking government officials. Many times these wield invisible political power over increasing numbers of manual laborers who control no capital in urban and rural areas. The loci of their power is difficult to locate and even though voters feel that they can mandate a decision, these individuals rarely make their decisions based on the wishes of the people. (Gamst:24) With the emergence of international organizations whose concern is for the welfare of powerless people, tribal people now have spokepersons capable of influencing these new elites through the media and economic pressure. With the globalization of the press and politics the practice of cultural genocide can no longer go unnoticed. The leadership is aware of the global dialogue which takes place daily through such programs as Ted Koppel's "Nightline." Broadcast media cross national bounderies so that television reports of the conditions of tribal people can be watched with interest around the world. Tribes are aware of the power of the media and in some instances they are seeking to increase their power base by presenting their own version of their conditions to the world. The Maori, for example, have a ten minute daily broadcast on New Zealand television, and they are seeking to establish their own TV station.

In some instances tribal peoples have been caught up in international politics. Some of the Kung Bushmen of the movie, "The Gods Must Be Crazy," have given up hunting wild game in the bush for tracking a guerrilla enemy for the South African Army. (Volkman:30-31) The plight of the Miskito Indians and the M'Buti Pygmy have raised international concern for their homeland. In the past, when confronted with major problems, tribal peoples have often looked to political leaders and governments for solutions, much like children looking up to parents. As political boundries become irrelevant and global dynamics undermine the nation-states, that filial attitude also may be obsolete. Tribal peoples may now take their problems to international organizations for assistance, a mechanism by which powerless tribal peoples can become empowered.

A major problem for the political elite is the huge migration of rural peoples into urban centers where their numbers are far in excess of the city's capability to employ, feed house, service, and educate. (Breese:43) This impoverished grou can provide a power base for malcontents and politicall ambitious individuals, yet there appears to be little attentic

given in the press and social studies texts to the differences between the "haves" and the "have nots." The drive to participate is a deep seated, perhaps genetically encoded, part of the human animal. (Lambert:30) The recent changes in the politics of Eastern Europe and China amply illustrate this drive.

THE ECONOMICS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

One cause of the global migration of people is the need for human capital to run the industries and provide the services around the world. As tribal peoples become disenfranchased from their land or as they migrate to urban centers because of increased aspirations, they provide a cultural heterogeniety to the work force and to the urban centers which must be accomodated socially, economically, and politically. The Turk working and living in Germany with his family, or the Tongan Islander working in New Jersey each add a new dimension to the workplace and to the neighborhood in which he lives. This is graphically demonstrated in the American diet which no longer consists of meat and potatoes, but tofu, tamales, tortillas, turtle soup, as well as spices from all over the world. It is reflected in the fact that Muslims will outnumber Jews in the United States within the next three years and that in Chicago there are more Muslims than Methodists, more Buddhists than Presbyterians, more Hindus than Congregationalists. (Lambert:20)

At the same time the Turk or the Tongan Islander will return to his village with new skills, a knowledge of a foreign language, literacy, and raised aspirations for his family. He will also return home with money which can serve as an economic base for the village. In some instances this resource may be what permits him to continue a traditional life style which otherwise might disappear due to local economics and social pressures.

With the great decrease in the cost of transportation and the speed with which one can travel from one location to another, tourism has become the number two industry in the world. Some years ago I met a young couple from New York city in the airport waiting room in Tashkent who were on their way to spend a week in a Kirghiz Yurt. A week prior I had observed a group of Kirghiz taking pictures in Moscow's Red Square. In such a manner economic resources flow in both directions between urban centers and rural areas.

In a similar manner goods flow between urban homes and village houses. Formerly clay containers were made in the village for local consumption. Now that the clay container has been replaced with an aluminum pot, the clay container is sold on the global market at prices dictated by distant consumers. The social aspects of marketing; gossip, reunion with friends and kindred, has been replaced by an unknown bureaucrat. The peddler or trader so familiar to all in the village, has been replaced by the supermarket checker. The clay pot now decorates the mantelpiece in the interior decorator's catalogue. Prehistoric and tribal art are found in living rooms all over the world. This is no small

matter! One of my Hopi acquaintenances grossed $400,000 last year on her silversmithing.

The world's most eagerly watched television program: by 50 million people every week, is a program about business. It's called "Dallas." (Lambert: 17) McDonald's are everywhere as is Coca Cola. When I was pursuing fieldwork in a remote village in Mexico a number of years ago, the only motorized vehicle that visited the village was the Coca Cola truck. This globalization of markets seeks in every way to standardize everything into a common global mode affecting tribal people as well as urbanites.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

In lower Manhattan a Korean-American composer-video artist wails on the video synthesizer, mixing an electronic paella of sound and image with ingredients from all over the world. The proletarianization of communication is driving the world to a certain commonality. (Lambert:17) It is becoming impossible to think in an insular Western-centric way anymore.

At the same time that the school and other non-formal instruments of education such as radio, television, and newsprint expose the tribal world to the outside world, they also expose the urban world to tribal peoples. In the latter instance one can sit in one's living room and travel vicariously to a Kung Bushman camp in South Africa, A Dani village in New Guinea, or worship at a Buddhist temple in Bali.

In the past literacy has been a social mechanism for classifying and ordering people. With the introduction of schools even in the most remote areas of the world, literacy can no longer used in this fashion. The school in the tribal territory not only exposes the youth to the outside world, but it is used as a means of indocrination. The literacy programs in socialist countries such as Cuba provide an excellent example of this process. Among tribal people the schools serves as a mean of identity shift from that of a common ancestor to that of a member of a nation-state.

With the increase of bilingual programs in the school, youth are being introduced to a second language. The predominance of the English language throughout the world is due in part to the prevalence of English language teaching in the school. Mongolian youth for example learn English as a second language. An airplane pilot can use English to land anywhere in the world. English is the language for advanced technologies. One can read a German scientific article and every other word is in English. Just about every word dealing with computers is English. Add to this the popularity of American and British movies and music, and one can readily see why English has become the LINGUA FRANCA of the world. The library of the future through computer technology and instant translation will probably be predominantly English.

Music is also a means of communication. "Hard rock" music is a mechanism for transporting mass culture around the world. It is the music not the muscians which is now important and which

appears to be so irresistible. On the other hand "tribal" music is also popular from Hawaiian chants to Ashanti drums. Hawaiian music, a mixture of a variety of traditional and foreign sounds and instruments (Potugese), has spread throughout the islands in the Pacific even to remote Australian aborigines. Each island has its star vocalist whose cassettes (Oceane Production,Tahiti) are sold to tourists and exported for sale along with Maori chants (Ode,Aukland), and Navajo corn grinding songs (Canyon Records, Phoenix) in music stores around the world.

Communication involves the use of symbols which represent either overtly or covertly, an ideology. To my knowledge no scholar has attempted to describe the global ideology which is spreading throughout the world. Certainly it includes a desire for manufactured goods, a desire for a certain standard of living, a desire for satisfying employment, a desire for the enjoyment of good health, a desire for peace, and a desire for some control over one's situation, whether one is a member of a tribal unit or an urbanite.

SUMMARY

This paper suggests that social scientists and social studies teachers need to look at the world as a whole, a totality, a system, instead of a sum of self-contained societies and cultures, and that we should look at how this totality developed over time. To accomplish this task we will have to redefine our perception of culture from that of a static homogeneous isolated aggregate of behaviors and norms to that of culture as fluid and permeable with multiple branching social alignments both within and without its bounderies in response to political and economic forces. We should also be aware that control of communication allows the managers of an ideology to determine the categories through which reality is perceived and deny the existence of alternative categories.

In a kin based tribal society the key distinction is between kinsmen by descent and by affinity and is symbolized as ties of blood or fertilizing spirit. In the modern capitalist society the key distinction is between the owners of the means of production and the workers and is legally and politically sanctified. Success is demonstrated by the ability to acquire valued commodities. The inability to consume, signals social defeat. As more tribal peoples participate in the capitalist mode of production they are susceptible to ideological movements which seek to change the definition of virtue and demerit. Such movements will not be restricted to small areas of the global surface, but will affect all the aggregates of people including those in this room.

Some topics which students should be addrssing in the classroom are:

1) How did the world come to be divided betwen the "haves" and the "have nots"?
Is this situation equitable? If not, how can it be changed?

2) Is (was) the quality of life in a tribal society or a peasant village more satisfying to the natives than their life today?

3) Is there a "world culture" which has been developing in recent times which is shared by all the population of the world?

4) Has there been a rise in social conscousness among the world's population for peace, freedom, and a certain standard of living for all the world's population?

5) How has the arrival of the "Coca Cola" culture affected the rural areas of the world?

6) Should "Ethnic Reserves" be created to protect tribal peoples much in the same manner as we have created reserves to protect wild animals?

7) Why does the Saudi Bedouin in the illustration on the cover of this paper keep his camel now that he has a pick up truck?

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